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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
U.S. to northern front before parliamentary approval - Sabah
300 Turkish military vehicles in northern Iraq - Hurriyet
Gen. Franks: Turk, Kurd clash possible in northern Iraq - Milliyet
Arinc, too, issues call for the decree - Aksam
Rumsfeld: Agreement with Turkey in any case - Turkiye
Barzani authorizes peshmerges to resist Turks - Vatan
Turkey, Denktas agree to reject Annan plan - Hurriyet

OPINION MAKERS
U.S. military buildup on Iraqi border - Radikal
Abramowitz: Lasting damage in bilateral relations if decree rejected - Zaman
Full support to Denktas, 'No' to Annan plan - Cumhuriyet
Annan plan couldn't pass the presidency hurdle - Yeni Safak

FINANCIAL JOURNALS
TUSIAD report questions Turkey, U.S. strategic partnership - Dunya
China joins France, Germany, Russia against U.S. - Finansal Forum

BRIEFING

Iraq: "Hurriyet" reports that 300 Turkish military vehicles went to northern Iraq through the Habur border gate. After a four-day break following the parliamentary refusal of deployment of foreign troops in Turkey, the U.S. has resumed transfer of troops to the Iraqi border. The U.S. is planning to set up a logistical center in Mardin, an operation center in Diyarbakir, and a coordination center in Ankara. In a 'sudden' change of position, papers report, Parliamentary Speaker Arinc said on Thursday that approval of a new motion for deployment of foreign troops would not harm the parliament's prestige. 'Those who want peace should be ready for war,' Arinc said. "Milliyet" quotes General Tommy Franks as saying that U.S. troops would do their best to prevent a possible armed conflict between Turkish troops and Kurdish peshmerges in northern Iraq. A recent opinion poll conducted in 18 Turkish urban areas among 1697 respondents showed 84.2 percent against a war. 82.7 percent opposed to transfer of U.S. troops to northern Iraq via Turkey, and 85 percent objected to opening bases and ports to foreigners. 88 percent believe the Turkish military should not engage in armed clashes with the Iraqi army, but merely protect national borders.

Cyprus: Turkish Cypriot leader Denktas came met with top-level Turkish officials at the Presidency on Thursday to assess a common policy before the March 10 meeting with UN Secretary General Annan and Greek Cypriot President

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Papadopoulos in The Hague. All papers believe that Denktas and the Turks have decided to reject the Annan proposal that the Cyprus plan be taken to referendum even without a signed agreement. The President's spokesman said after the summit that the UN plan was far from meeting Turkish expectations. Denktas held a meeting with AKP leader Erdogan before the summit. The lack of an agreement on Cyprus would be the largest obstacle on Turkey's path to EU membership, Erdogan

said after the meeting. Papers report that a rally will be staged on Friday in the Turkish Cypriot sector against the UN plan. Denktas is expected to deliver a speech during the demonstration.

Siirt special election: AKP leader Erdogan will likely win a parliamentary seat in Sunday's special election in the Siirt province, and will assume the prime ministry now that his political ban has been overturned. Leaders of the influential Nakhsibendi sect in Siirt have voiced open support to Erdogan, saying that Siirt would benefit from having Erdogan, the leader of a strong government, as its deputy.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq

"The Chain of mistakes by the US"

Sedat Ergin analyzes US cooperation with Turkey on the Iraq process and notes where the US has gone wrong, in the mass appeal Hurriyet (3/7): "There are mistakes of the AKP administration at issue here, but there are also certain mistakes or oversights which are directly Washington's responsibility. . . When Assistant Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz first visited Ankara to express Washington's determination about Iraq, Turkey was going through a period of political turmoil. Prime Minister Ecevit was having serious health problems, and his party was on the verge of dissolving. One of the coalition leaders was calling for early elections. Despite the turmoil, Washington somehow felt confident of having convinced Turkey to cooperate in any possible military operation. Washington did not hesitate to start a dialogue about war preparations with the Ecevit government, despite prospects that the AKP would win the election. . Two weeks prior to the early elections, the Pentagon presented to Turkey a list of military demands. Ecevit gave no response, and the new government that was swept to power in the elections was lacking experience in handling state affairs. Washington also miscalculated about the AKP's political roots by not taking into account probable difficulties in securing cooperation from a party with an Islamist tradition. The US ignored the possibility of AKP's strong opposition to the war. . Washington did not see the fact that the vast majority of the Turkish public was not convinced at all about the reasons for using a military option against Iraq. The US failed to see the fact that the memory of the problems created by the Gulf War -- terrorism and economic losses -- was very much alive in the minds of the Turkish people. Evidently the Bush administration ignored Turkey's sensitivities as part of its 'We, the ruler of the world' mood. . When Washington asked for the deployment of a colossal number of American soldiers on Turkish soil, i.e. 90,000, they failed to anticipate the negative psychological impact on the Turkish people. The US acted with a presumption that it was possible to force Turkey to accept all the demands, and ignored the need for flexibility in a diplomatic bargaining process. The pressure exerted by the US on Turkey in the last two months really pushed the limits of the relationship between the two strategic partners. Turkey was upset because of frequent US threats to implement a plan B. In reality, that did not happen and the US did not change the route of its aircraft carriers. . The US failed to meet Turkey's economic, political and military concerns in a timely manner. The belated action on the US side to meet those demands or to answer the worries was another mistake on the American side. The US side made a serious tactical mistake by blocking the bargain with Turkey because of disagreements on minor issues. The American media was criticizing Turkey for bargaining too hard, but at the same time US officials pressed for days about buying oil at Turkey's discounted price."

"Second decree"

Hasan Cemal opined in mass appeal Milliyet (3/7): "Turkey deserves a much better state-affairs handling. Every organ of the state structure has its share of responsibility. First and foremost, it goes to the government of course. Turkey is going through the most critical period of its history since the Turkish republic was founded. Let's make an effort and see the whole picture, not bits and pieces. Take the Iraq issue: It is not only an issue for the Iraqi Kurds, but it also concerns the Turkish Kurds, Turkey's integrity, Turkish democracy and economy as well as the future of Turkey's relations with the US. Take the Cyprus issue: It is not only an issue for the Cypriots, but is a concern about Turkey's relations with the EU as well as its connection with the West. At this critical stage, the second decree (allowing US soldiers in Turkish soil) becomes even more important."